

January 2, 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. RICHARD BURKE
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Senator Keating's Statements on Cuba

Attached is a summary of Senator Keating's statements as disclosed by our files. You will note that there is very little which can be specifically disproved in retrospect.

I have included enough text to give you an accurate flavor of his allegations both before and after October 14.

Thomas L. Hughes
Keating

Attachment:

Summary of Senator Keating's
Statements on Cuba

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Senator Feating's comments on the Senate floor
regarding the Cuban build-up appear in the Congressional
Record on the following pages from September 1 through
October 14, 1962.

Page Nos.

17277-8	-	August 31, 1962
17358	-	September 4, 1962
17559-67	-	September 5, 1962
17612-45	-	September 6, 1962
17673	-	September 10, 1962
17879	-	September 10, 1962
17922-6	-	September 10, 1962
18248	-	September 13, 1962
18457	-	September 14, 1962
18539	-	September 20, 1962
19234	-	September 24, 1962
19530	-	September 25, 1962
19518-19	-	September 25, 1962
20467	-	October 2, 1962
21539	-	October 3, 1962
21566-7	-	October 9, 1962
21729	-	October 10, 1962
21593	-	October 11, 1962

For the most part these remarks consist of complaints
that the Administration has failed to tell certain facts
to the American people, but also that stronger action is
required regardless of what the facts show.

Thus on September 6, 1962 (Congressional Record,
page 1784) Senator Feating said:

"Mr. President, I think the best comment on
and the best answer to President Kennedy's state-
ment on Soviet aid to Cuba must be given in his
own words. We can no longer afford to think
only of organized combat forces, of military

bases, of violations of the 1934 treaty, or of offensive ground-to-ground missiles, for as the President himself so very effectively pointed out barely a year ago:

"Our security may be lost without the firing of a single missile or the crossing of a single border."

During September and early October, both on and off the Senate floor, Senator Keating continued to stress the presence of Soviet "troops" in Cuba, opposition to the President's "offensive -- defensive" dictatorship, the scale of Soviet shipping to Cuba, the desirability of preventing NATO flag shipping to Cuba, and the alleged suppression of information by the Administration.

On October 2, 1962, he made the following specific statement on the Senate floor (Congressional Record, page 20467):

"Meanwhile, the equipment continues to flow from Russia into Cuba -- crates that are so large that special unloading machinery is required, cars so secret that they are unloaded only by Russians or Czechoslovaks under cover of darkness, containers so long that two railroad cars must be hooked together to carry them."

On October 9, Senator Keating took the Senate floor again (Congressional Record, pages 21664-7) for a full scale review of his views on U.S. policy towards Cuba. He specifically treated Under Secretary Ball's "admissions"

about anti-aircraft missiles but does not make allegations about missiles of any other kind.

The following day, October 10, Senator Keating again took the Senator floor (Congressional Record, page 21728) with what must have been new information which he either had obtained during the previous twenty-four hours or had for some inexplicable reason failed to use before. The Senator now stated:

"Mr. President, yesterday I spoke on the subject of Cuba. At that time I did not have fully confirmed the matter to which I shall address myself now. I now have it fully confirmed. As a result, I call upon the appropriate Government officials to confirm or to deny reports of intermediate range missile bases in Cuba."

"Construction has begun on at least a half dozen launching sites for intermediate range tactical missiles. Intelligence authorities must have advised the President and top Government officials of this fact, and they must now have been told that ground-to-ground missiles can be operational from the island of Cuba within 6 months."

"My own sources on the Cuban situation, which have been 100 percent reliable, have substantiated this report completely."

* * * *

"The fact of the matter is, according to my reliable sources, that six launching sites are under construction--pads which will have the power to hurl rockets into the American heart land and as far as the Panama Canal Zone."

"Why would Under Secretary Ball give the committee the impression that new missile sites were

a possibility rather than a fact? Even as possibilities, he indicated they would be short range rather than intermediate range missile sites. Why has such a veil been thrown around Cuba, keeping this new information from the American people? Are they still trying to perpetuate the myth that the buildup is defensive? Is it possible anyone in Government is childish enough to believe this?

"According to Mr. Walter Lippmann's column of yesterday, the United States has 'an elaborate system of surveillance by sea, by air, and by land and there is every reason to think that its accuracy is very high. Little of military interest can happen without our knowing it. We do not have to guess. We know.'

"If this is true, our Government is well aware of the fact that within a matter of months Cuba may have the capability of launching intermediate range missiles, but the American people are being kept in the dark. The Soviets know the fact. The Cubans know this fact. But in the view of the administration our people are not entitled to know it.

"Mr. President, let us have all the facts, and have them now."

Twice in his October 10 speech Senator Keating referred to six intermediate range missile sites. Strictly speaking this is a larger number of IRBM sites than were in fact discovered in Cuba a few days later, although Keating slipped easily between referring to "sites" and "pads" not only on October 10 but subsequently in public statements. His statement on the six IRBM sites remains, however, the only technically and provably erroneous statement he made during the entire period of the Cuba buildup.

In an interview on NBC Monitor Sunday, November 4, Senator Keating reconstructed his position as follows:

KEATING: . . . Constantly and continually from the time I first spoke on August 31st -- in ten Senate speeches, one appearance before the Senate Armed Services Committee, and fourteen other public statements -- in nearly every instance the official government agencies denied the accuracy of my remarks. They even sent one of their Senators to the floor to deny them on the floor. He must be quite embarrassed today. But this and again when I first told of the buildup of these tanks and trucks and jeeps and ammunition and missiles and torpedo boats on the 31st day of August, it was immediately denied. And then as you remember the President on the 4th day of September told of the existence of sets of these things and said they were purely defensive. Thereupon I said that the question of whether a particular weapon was offensive or defensive depended entirely on the triggerman, the intention of the fellow that had it. And coming along later, on the tenth day of October, I said that there were six intermediate missile sites under construction in Cuba, that they had been under construction for several days at that time, and that they would be operational in six months which was much less than the real time. I've said it purposely longer than I really felt they could take to be operational. That was denied. And then as you know twelve days later the President told the nation that. And I want to say right here and now, that at every time when I spoke on this subject I either had it from official sources or had it from others and confirmed by official sources before I ever said a word. And I was sure of the accuracy of the statements when I made them.

FRASER: Any idea why they were denied?

KEATING: That would be pure speculation. I am baffled by it.

The Senator repeated his "confirmation" statements in subsequent national television appearances and in a lengthy interview with US News and World Report, November 19, 1962. In the latter interview the following exchanges occurred:

Q. Senator, what were the sources of your information about Cuba?

A. The sources were either (a) sources in the U.S. Government, or (b) other sources -- less than 5 per cent of which were Cuban refugees -- all of which were verified through official sources of the U.S. Government before I made any statement.

Q. So you had knowledge before you spoke?

A. I had knowledge and so did Government officials.

Q. Did the President have this knowledge?

A. I do not know what was on the President's desk.

* * * *

Q. What about the intermediate-range missiles -- those with a range of more than 2,000 miles?

A. The intermediate-missile launching sites came to my attention in early October. This information was verified officially on October 9, and I spoke on October 10. I said that there were six intermediate missile launching sites under construction that could be operational within six months. That was the longest estimate that I had. These sites require large-scale excavation, but under a crash program could be made operational in two to three months.

In this speech I said that under no stretch of the imagination could these missile sites be considered defensive installations. Of course, my statement was immediately pounced upon as being inaccurate.

Responding to reporters' inquiries, the State Department flatly denied existence of such sites. As we know, on October 22 the President not only verified what I had said, but added what I had been very careful not to say, that the intermediate-range missiles also were there.

Q. That was how long after your warning about intermediate-range missile bases?

A. It was 12 days later. As to missiles themselves, what I said was that there had been long objects seen, wrapped up, cylindrical in appearance, which had to be carried by two flatcars hauled together. Of course, I did not have photographs. I had no positive information that those were intermediate-range missiles, but they certainly were too long for ground-to-air missiles.

Since then I have seen letters mailed from Cuba in mid-October which described many more of those 90 to 100-foot missiles in various parts of the island.

Q. Now

Q. How does it happen that you, a Senator, not in the executive branch of the Government, can get such obviously authentic information ahead of the President? Is it possible that Administration officials had the information and didn't want to admit it, or is it possible you had information not available to the White House and State Department?

A. At the time I spoke they had, officially, the same information that I used.

Q. Are you sure of that?

A. I am positive of it. There cannot be any question about it. Their latest attack upon me is to say that if I had this information I should have given it to them. Well, they had it. It is a fact that every channel that I had they were contacting and had the benefit of.

Q. Why, then, didn't the top officials react to the information in the same way that you did?

A. I think that perhaps there was a difference of interpretation. For instance, on October 14 on "Issues and Answers" (ABC network), Mr. George Ball, Special Assistant to the President, said he did not believe that the Soviets would "attempt to install a major offensive capability" in Cuba.

I am told that there was considerable discussion within the administration as to what the information meant, and that only one prominent person in the high councils placed the same interpretation upon it that I did.

Q. Could you say -- looking back on all that has happened -- that this country had capable intelligence information and that the real controversy is over what we were made of it?

A. That is my impression -- that there was no intelligence gap here, but that the top-level interpretation of the intelligence left something to be desired.

(Note: The same issue of United States News and World Report, November 19, 1962, contains the following paragraph under the heading "Washington Whispers":

John McCone, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who shuns the limelight, had his reputation enhanced at the White House with his early reporting and correct appraisal of the Soviet buildup in Cuba. Some White House advisers argued that the Russians would not dare base nuclear missiles in Cuba, and held to their positions until photographic evidence proved them wrong.)